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The University of Montana

NEWS RELEASE

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Nov. 3, 1995

BIGFORK HIGH SCHOOL DEBATE TEAM MEMBERS BUILD ARGUMENTS AT UM'S MANSFIELD CENTER

MISSOULA --

Bigfork High School debaters, honing their arguments on changing America's policy toward China, visited The University of Montana last week to meet with some of the people whose lives would be altered by such action.

The six-member team led by debate coach Paul Sullivan grilled two UM students and a faculty member from Taiwan, Hong Kong and the People's Republic of China about issues ranging from human rights to control of nuclear proliferation. Two students from a Bigfork High School class studying world peace also joined the team in learning more about the views of Chinese citizens.

The group came together in a fitting place--UM's Maureen and Mike Mansfield Center, which was established to inspire students and others with the ideas, concerns and examples of Mike Mansfield regarding modern Asian affairs.

The students learned that not everyone thinks the same as Americans. Team members said the information they heard will help them strengthen debate arguments on whether U.S. policy toward the People's Republic of China should change significantly.

"It gives us a broader perspective," said freshman debater Daryn Benson, noting that the visit also helped team members anticipate opposing arguments.

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"It was really helpful," said fellow freshman Robert Regester. "It gives us new insight into the Chinese and what they believe. It's not as one-sided as we're used to in the United States."

The students came to the Mansfield Center at the invitation of acting director Philip West, who presented a brief lesson on Mansfield and his contributions as a U.S. senator from Montana and as U.S. ambassador to Japan.

"We need to make Montana kids more aware that there are other cultures out there," debate coach Sullivan said. "The Mansfield Center is a wonderful opportunity for doing it. That was Mike Mansfield's intent."

Students who participated in the trip besides Benson and Regester were freshmen Evan Grauer, Kathrine Johnson and Ryan Huffman, and sophomores Nicole Smith, Darbi Anderson and Marianne Creamer.

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RM
Bigfork Eagle
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